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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: NOVEMBER 21, 2008

SUMMARY: Reports of a suicide attack on a mosque in Bajaur Agency killing eight people dominated headlines in all newspapers on Friday. Prime Minister Gilani's statement declaring the U.S. drone attacks as "intolerable" also received front page coverage. Highlighted side by side were reports on the "summoning of U.S. Ambassador Patterson to the Foreign Office to protest against Wednesday's drone strike in Bannu." All newspapers also highlighted U.S. General McKiernan statement that the "U.S. and Pakistan also share video feeds from Predator drones that carry out attacks."

Most major dailies ran scathing editorials on the recent missile attack in the settled district of Bannu in the NWFP. The center-right Urdu daily, "Pakistan," advocated that "Pakistan must start an effective diplomatic campaign that urges the U.S. to stop strikes inside Pakistan." The independent Urdu daily, "Din," noted that "if in only 8 months the U.S. has violated Pakistan's airspace 40 times, one can well imagine what the pace will be in future." The leading mass circulation Urdu daily, "Jang," observed that "the attack on a neighborhood of Bannu reinforces the idea that the NATO forces and other allies of the United States are all set to hit other cities and parts of the NWFP in the garb of operation against terrorists and militants." End Summary.

News Stories

11. "Suicide Attack on Mosque: Lashkar Chief Eliminated" "Dawn" (11/21)

"The chief of a tribal lashkar and eight other people were killed when a suicide bomber blew himself up in a mosque in Bajaur Agency on Thursday. According to an official claim, 17 militants, including 11 foreigners, were killed when security forces, backed by helicopter gunships and artillery, pounded militants' hideouts in Mamond area."

12. "U.S. Drone Attacks Intolerable: PM: No Secret Accord with Washington, NA Assured" "Dawn" (11/21)

"Most fingers were pointed at the United States in the National Assembly on Thursday for what Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani called an 'intolerable' drone attack on a suspected militant hideout in the NWFP, but none at Al Qaeda or Taliban against whom Pakistan is the West's ally in the so-called war against terrorism."

13. "Gilani Looks To Obama for End to Drone Attacks" "The NEWS" (11/21)

"Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Thursday severely condemned the U.S. drone attacks and expressed the hope that with Barack Obama assuming power, these attacks would come to an end."

14. "PM Hopes Against Hope," "The News" (11/21)

"The optimism being expressed by Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani and some senior officials regarding halt to U.S. drone attacks after Barack Obama's assumption of power is quite out of place. Pakistani authorities and its mission in Washington can boast no undertaking from the new U.S. administration about the stoppage of the drone attacks. The U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates is said to be the architect of the drone attack policy. He is expected to continue with the new administration of President-elect Barack Obama."

15. "Ambassador Summoned Over Bannu Attack" "Dawn" (11/21)

"Pakistan summoned U.S. Ambassador Anne W Patterson to the Foreign Office on Thursday and lodged a protest against Wednesday's drone strike in Bannu, a settled area of the NWFP. "A strong protest was lodged by Foreign Secretary Salman Bashir on the two missiles fired by U.S. drones on a residential compound in Bannu district," Foreign Office Spokesman Mohammad Sadiq said at his weekly briefing. Calling for an immediate halt to drone strikes, the foreign secretary told the ambassador that such attacks violated Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The ambassador, who was called to the Foreign Office for the third time in a few months, said she would convey Islamabad's concerns to Washington."

16. "U.S. Envoy Summoned" "Daily Times" (11/21)

"Pakistan on Thursday said a third party would not be involved in the issue of territorial violations by the U.S., and the government will solve the problem bilaterally with the Americans." The comments came at the weekly Foreign Office (FO) briefing addressed by spokesman Muhammad Sadiq, in reply to a question about taking the matter to the United Nations. "Taking the issue to a multilateral body requires a different nature of government decisions," said the spokesman."

17. "U.S., Pakistan Share Drone Data: General" "Dawn" (11/21)

"The United States not only has an understanding with Pakistan to attack suspected terrorist targets inside its borders but also shares with the Pakistani military top-secret video feeds from Predator drones that carry out such attacks, says a senior U.S. general. "We exchange frequencies. We exchange intelligence. We have a Predator feed going down to the one border coordination centre at Torkham Gate that's looked at by the Pakistan Military, Afghan Military, and the International Security Assistance Force," Gen David McKiernan, who heads U.S. and allied forces in Afghanistan, told a Washington think-tank."

18. "44 Taliban Killed, Mohmand Braces for New Offensive" "Daily Times" (11/21)

"At least 24 Taliban fighters - including 11 foreigners and one local commander - were killed in the military operation in Bajaur on Thursday as warplanes pounded Taliban positions in Swat, killing 20 fighters using a school building in Matta area, according to official sources, local residents and AFP."

19. "Nine killed as shell hits house in Swat" "The News" (11/21)

"Nine civilians were killed and four others injured when shells fired by the security forces accidentally landed on a house in Alam Ganj area of Khwazakhela Tehsil on Thursday."

110. "Halt to NATO Logistics Demanded" "The News" (11/21)

"Chairman of the Senate standing committee on the interior Senator Talha Mehmood on Thursday said the government must stop support to logistics support to NATO forces in the larger interest of the country."

111. "Rally Condemns U.S. Drone Attacks" "The News" (11/21)

"Jammāt-e-Islamī Ameer for Bannu Mattiullah Jan Thursday condemned U.S. drone attacks and urged security forces to target the intruding planes. A protest demonstration was taken out which after passing through different bazars finally reached chowk bazaar and turned

into a public rally."

¶12. "Objective of Drones Remains Mystery" "Pakistan Observer" (11/21)

"Senior Pakistani strategists are yet to determine the 'actual objectives' of U.S. drones' attacks inside Pakistan which killed more than 278 people in more than 29 attacks in tribal and settled areas. According to inner circle different schools of thoughts have different versions about their assessment on continued U.S. attack. One strong lobby believes that "it is the litmus test before a more dangerous move aimed at our strategic assets" while moderates who are considered as sympathetic to war on terror measure the move as "last budge" by neo-cons to create complications for President-elect Barack Obama."

¶13. "No Information about Bin Laden's Death: U.S." "Pakistan Observer" (11/21)

"United States has no information that Osama bin Laden has died despite his continuing silence, the White House said Wednesday after the broadcast of a new message from al-Qaeda's number two. "I'd have to refer you to the intelligence community for that. I don't believe that we have any intelligence that suggests that he is not living," said spokeswoman Dana Perino."

¶14. "CIA Is Responsible For Missile Attacks; General Patraeus Is Helpless: NWFP Governor Ghani" "Mashriq" (11/21)

"NWFP Governor Owais Ahmad Ghani while expressing concerns over the U.S. drone attacks on the settled areas of the province has said that these missile attacks are being launched under the direct supervision of the U.S. intelligence agency CIA, and this agency is controlling the whole issue. In an exclusive interview with this newspaper, Governor Ghani added that the U.S. CENTCOM chief General Patraeus is helpless in this matter."

¶15. "Army to be trained to Fight in FATA" "Daily Times" (11/21)

"The army's operational force in the Tribal Areas and FATA would be trained in accordance with the conditions in the area, Mangla Corps Commander Lieutenant Gen Nadeem Ahmed said on Thursday. He was talking to reporters after overseeing war exercise 'Shah Sawar 2008' in Kharian. He said Chief of the Army Staff Gen Ashfaq Kayani has declared 2009 as the year of armed forces' training"

¶16. "Taliban Threaten Revenge Attacks" "The Nation" (11/21)

"A Pakistani Taliban commander warned on Thursday there would be reprisals by militants across the country if the U.S. carried out further drone attacks in the tribal territory. Hafiz Gul Bahadur announced the decision at a Taliban council meeting in North Waziristan tribal district which borders Afghanistan, his spokesman said."

¶17. "Kamran New TTP Jamrud Chief" "The Nation" (11/21)

"Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan Chief Baitullah Mehsud through a printed pamphlet declared Maulvi Mustafa Kamran as the TTP Jamrud chapter Chief on Thursday.

Editorials/Op-eds

¶18. "U.S. Strike in Bannu" an editorial in the Lahore-based center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir 5000) (11/21)

"America must realize that only Pakistani forces should conduct operations in Pakistani territory, as the Army Chief stated to NATO commanders in Brussels. NATO commanders agreed with his view. In this context, Pakistan must start an effective diplomatic campaign that urges the U.S. to stop strikes inside Pakistan."

¶19. "76th U.S. Aggression: Pakistan Should go to the UN" an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din" (cir. 5000) (11/21)

"It needs to be mentioned that after the present government's induction, the number of U.S. strikes has crossed 40. In fact, the former ISI Chief General (retired) Hamid Gul puts the number at 76 - [in his words] "30 during Musharraf's dictatorship and 40 during Zardari's democracy." If in only eight months the U.S. has violated Pakistan's airspace 40 times, one can well imagine what the pace will be in future. Our rulers should not forget that the Bannu is not too far from Islamabad."

¶20. "NATO Command Must Consider General Kayani's Piece of Advice," an editorial in the leading mass circulation centrist Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (11/21)

"The attack on a neighborhood of Bannu reinforces the idea that the NATO forces and other allies of the United States are all set to hit other cities and parts of the NWFP in the garb of operation against terrorists and militants. Moreover, this attack also gives a clue that the U.S. is following the statements of President-elect Barack Obama that he made during his election campaign that he would order the U.S. troops to attack FATA and other settled areas of Pakistan without any prior permission of the Pakistani administration."

¶21. "U.S. Missiles Now Hit Settled Areas," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (11/21)

"... The outrageous act has created more resentment both against the United States and the Government of Pakistan that has so far been unable to take up the issue in due earnest with Washington. There are apprehensions that today it is Bannu and tomorrow Americans will target places anywhere in Kohat, other areas of the NWFP and even

beyond on the pretext of receiving information about presence of foreign and local militants. After every such attack the US forces and the Western media tried to belittle their gravity by claiming killing of foreign elements including Al-Qaeda leaders but there is no proof that anyone except local innocent people was killed...."

¶22. "Islamabad Is Not Too Far Away," an editorial note in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (11/21)

"Now the U.S. forces have started missile attacks on other parts of the NWFP following targeting the tribal areas. The situation is changing so fast that we cannot imagine what the U.S. is going to do with us in future. However, we should not be delighted that Islamabad is too far from the U.S.-hit areas of the NWFP. If our rulers don't take any serious step even after the Bannu incident, the day is not far when we will see U.S. drones hovering on Islamabad."

¶23. "Rising U.S. Aggression and Our Usual Silence," an editorial note in the Karachi-based, pro Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (11/21)

"No one can deny the fact that the Government of Pakistan has remained unmoved to the U.S. incursions as perhaps our rulers have given a free hand to the Americans to do whatever and wherever in Pakistan. If Pakistan does not work out any concrete and helpful course of action on this question, there is a strong possibility that the Americans may attack any religious school or mosque of Islamabad anytime in future under a pretext of targeting some Al-Qaeda operative."

¶24. "U.S. Missile Attack in Suburb of Bannu," an editorial in the Peshawar-based Urdu-language daily "Mashriq" (cir. 55,000) (11/21)

"Even if we agree to the U.S. claim about killing of some Al-Qaeda operatives in missile attack near Bannu, the attack establishes the fact that the U.S. administration has perhaps now declared that Pakistan deserves same treatment as Afghanistan in the ongoing war on terror at the moment. Those elements who are very optimistic about good relations between Pakistan and the U.S. and looking forward to an end of missile attacks once President-elect Obama assumes his office should reconsider their opinion."

¶25. "Bigger Battlefield," An Editorial In The Centrist National English Daily "The News" (Cir. 55,000) (11/21)

"So far, President Zardari seems to have pinned his hopes on a change in U.S. strategy by the incoming Obama administration. He and other members of the government have stated on several occasions that they are optimistic policy will be reviewed and altered. The question is what, if anything, Pakistan is doing to make this more likely and to bring about a change in the views of president-elect Barack Obama regarding tactics in Pakistan, given that consistently through his electoral campaign he had adopted a hard-line stance. Somehow, Islamabad needs to find a way to persuade Washington that it would more effectively be able to fight terrorism if it was allowed to do so, on its own and that such a war would win greater support from people."

¶26. "Searching for Solutions," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (11/21)

"Gen. Ashfaq Kayani is spot on in his assessment that the Afghan insurgency cannot be overcome through military means alone.... Despite all the talk of dialogue, it is clear that there is currently no intention in any quarter of easing the military pressure on the Taliban. This makes sense, for any understanding with the militants must be reached from a position of strength. The need of the hour is for improved tripartite coordination between the coalition forces and Pakistani and Afghan security agencies...."

¶27. "Terrorists under Pressure," An editorial in the Lahore-Based Liberal English Language Daily "Daily Times" (Cir. 10,000) (11/21)

"Determined military operations in Bajaur and Swat have brought the terrorists under pressure. For the first time the military is not only being supported by local tribes, there are local militias to back up action by the army. Mohmand Agency is the latest to challenge the Taliban. After the exit of President Pervez Musharraf

from the scene, many developments have strengthened the position of Pakistan against the foreign elements located inside its territory and their local supporters."

¶28. "Army Chief's Address in Brussels: End the U.S. Strikes, Don't Just Make Suggestions" an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (11/21)

"Like the Army Chief, the President and the Prime Minister have also appealed in vain that U.S. strikes be stopped. In fact the strikes increased and have now expanded. Hence upon returning to the country, the Army Chief, President and the Prime Minister must sit together to put the parliament's resolution into action."

¶29. "Talk unequivocally to the U.S." an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (11/21)

"Policies of the Bush administration have not only endangered world peace and global economy; they have also led to domestic problems for the U.S. Missile strikes in Pakistani territory will worsen the situation further. The new U.S. administration should not remain a silent spectator to these issues... If the U.S. administration continues on this path, it would wreak irreparable damage on the world."

¶30. "Talibanization of Youth," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (11/21)

"With the Taliban expanding their reach inside Pakistan, it is becoming amply clear that the menace of radicalization that leads to religious militancy must be targeted at the roots.... Unfortunately, with the madressah system going strong - and likely to exert even greater influence on young minds if public-sector schooling continues to decline and private education becomes unaffordable - there is a very real danger that ultra religious tendencies among the youth will receive a boost. This, in turn, will lead to the formation of dogmatic mindsets at a considerable distance from the pillars of logic, reason and humanism and unable to tolerate divergent opinions...."

¶31. "Burning Anger, Smouldering Silence" An Op-ed by Ayaz Amir in

The Centrist National English Daily "The News" (Cir. 55,000)
(11/21)

"The Americans can pat themselves on the back for the change they have helped engineer in Pakistan: replacing a yes-man---Pervez Musharraf---who had outlived his utility and had become a liability with a fresh yes-man---President Zardari---who is all too keen to do America's bidding and prove his usefulness to his American benefactors, who helped his rise to power. Up to a point Musharraf knew how to play the Americans. The new combo we have, Zardari and Kayani, is not playing the Americans. They are playing the Pakistani people by leading a loud chorus about sovereignty when in fact Pakistani sovereignty, or what remains of it, lies fatally compromised because of Pakistan's servitude to American interests."

¶32. "In The Name Of Revenge," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (11/21)

"It appears that General (r) Ameer Faisal Alvi, a former head of the military Special Services Group (SSG), who was shot dead in a daring attack in Islamabad, may have been killed in revenge for his past involvement in operations against militants in the tribal areas. The Taliban, it seems, were eager to deliver a clear-cut message. The retired general was seen as a 'soft target'. His death, alongside that of his driver, is a reminder of the extremist hatred for the forces acting against them and of their ruthlessness. The game of revenge is obviously a dangerous one. It is not known if other targets are in sight. The killing could also set a pattern that 'copy cat' assassins emulate, to gun down, in a similar fashion, those involved in actions against militants at various times."

Patterson